THE NINTH DAY.

10th March 1921.

The Assembly met at 11-30 A. M. on Thursday, the 10th March 1921.

VII. EDUCATION.

115. Some educational suggestions with special reference to the pay of teachers in the Departmental and aided Vernacular Schools.

Mr. N. Kumaran Asan (Member, Nominated) represented that the pay of teachers in departmental schools and that in aided schools exhibited a striking difference which contributed to the growing unpopularity of the latter institutions. That the aided institutions served a very useful and potent function in the State was an undoubted fact, and it was hoped that their utility would be more sympathetically considered by Government. The Member thanked the Government for their generosity in revising the grant-in-aid rates, and observed that the condition of the teachers in aided schools deserved to be further improved.

In regard to the half-fee concessions sanctioned by Government, the Member pointed out that such concessions should be granted according to merit and not according to communities. Every community, backward or otherwise, possessed boys who deserved the concession. Many of them were helpless. There were boys in the so-called backward or depressed classes who did not need or deserve any concession, and in such cases, the concession proved to be a waste. Hence, the principle upon which the half-fee concession was now based was unsound and should be modified. He, however, conceded that special classes like the Pulayas and Parayas deserved to be freely accorded that concession in view of their peculiar social and economic disabilities.

The next point on which the Member spoke related to the disability of some pupils who had been selected for the English School Leaving Certificate Examination. In certain cases, boys were selected for the examination, and they sat for it and obtained the requisite number of marks. But the certificate was at last refused to them on the ground of shortage of attendance. The practice, although it might be justified by departmental rules and circulars, was highly unfair to the pupils. The attendance was only intended for the satisfactory equipment of the pupil, and if the pupil proved himself as fully equipped and satisfied the standard expected of him at the public examination, there was absolutely no justification for withholding the certificate from him. It was on the other hand a source of deep discouragement to him. The Member prayed that the above rule might be promptly modified.

With regard to admission to schools, the Member said that it was a matter for grievance that there were some schools not yet open to all classes of His Highness' subjects. The prohibition was based on grounds of proximity to temples, palaces, residence of high caste men, etc. He animadverted on the last reason and pointed out that there was no reasonable justification for such a prohibition. He also referred to Section 69 of the Education Code and said that the provision therein contained to the effect that the Director might, with the approval of Government, sanction, in the case of any school, or of any class of schools, such restriction or restrictions on admission as he might consider reasonable, was inconsistent with the principle laid down in the early part of that section that no pupil should be refused admission to any school on the ground of class, caste or religion. The provision restricting admission should be deleted, as it was inconsistent with modern ideas of civic rights and responsibilities. He added that an aided school could w

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propriety refuse ... ...ool could not do so without jeopardising communal concord and harmony. ...between particular the Fort Girls' school, Trivandrum, and observed that the ...hoch schools, intended to serve the educational requirements of the girls, were unhealthy in that they tended to blur the mental vision of pupils, ...rded ...pede the growth of catholicity of spirit in the rising generation of mothers. In conclusion, the Member spoke with approbation of the declared policy of Government towards special and denominational schools.

Dewan's reply.—You suggest that half-fee concession should not be given to communities as such but should be given to deserving pupils among communities which are classed as backward and that the concession should also be made available to deserving boys of other communities. The suggestion is a good one, but it will be difficult to carry it out into practice. In the case of communities like the Pulaya and the Paraya who are admittedly poor, there is on difficulty, because the whole community will, as you say, receive the concession, but there are other communities, such for instance as the Mahomedan community, the poverty of a particular member of which may be a matter of doubt.

Member.—Why should the headmaster not be called upon to decide the question ?

Dewan.—That will be placing a dangerous weapon in the hands of the headmaster.

Member.—Then, it may be left to some people of the place.

Dewan.—Yes, the suggestion is capable of being carried out to some material extent, only when non-official help becomes available. The Village Council would be in a position to say exactly who are the boys that are really poor and deserve the concession and who are not. They will know whether a boy belongs to a rich or a poor family. We must wait until we get these Councils. The suggestion is a very important one and will be remembered by Government. For the present, as I said, it will be difficult to give effect to it.

You say that some boys are selected for the English School Leaving Certificate Examination and that after they get through the public examination they are refused the certificates for want of requisite attendance. I am inclined to think that it is the headmaster that should be punished in such cases. If the boys obtain the requisite percentages of marks, they ought not to suffer. I shall refer the question to the Director and see what can be done.

There are only 48 schools which are not open to certain communities on account of their proximity to temples or palaces. It is the constant effort of Government to reduce the number of such schools. I shall see that special attention is paid to this matter. Lastly, you want the deletion of Section 69 of the Education Code. This is an important Section, and it seems to me that its retention may be necessary on other than caste grounds. I cannot make a pronouncement in regard to it without careful consideration.

Member.—I hope you will reflect upon that matter.

Dewan.—Yes.

116. Some educational needs of the State.

Rev. Fr. Joseph C. Panjikaran M. A.(Member, Municipal Council, Alwaye) stated that the observation made by the Dewan in his opening Address to the effect that the education imparted in the State was far too bookish and literary and not sufficiently practical or vocational was correct. He would add that it was also far too materialistic and non-moral. It overlooked the important fact that a man was composed of both body and soul, the latter of which was, to say the least, at least as important as the former. It by no means trained young men to be men of character, men whose conduct was to be guided and governed by sound moral principles. It did not

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